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Safety Training; First Aid Bills Passed *Coaches and Teachers Required to be Certified*

May 20, 2003-The Michigan Senate took a major step forward in continuing to protect our state's children with the passage of Senate Bill 179 and House Bill 4038. These bills require school coaches to be certified in sports safety training and teachers to be certified in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). The bills, if signed into law, will take effect July 1, 2004.

SB 179, sponsored by Senate Majority Floor Leader Beverly Hammerstrom (R-Temperance), and HB 4038, sponsored by Representative Sal Rocca (R-Sterling Heights) were introduced in an effort to prepare coaches and educators when faced with an injury or potential emergency situation.

"Currently, there is no safety training requirement for coaches and teachers, yet they often are the first responders to an injury during practice or games, or in the classroom," said Senator Hammerstrom. "It makes sense to ensure that they possess the proper skills to offer assistance, whether the situation is a minor injury or serious emergency."

The legislation mandates that CPR and first-aid training must be completed before teachers are certified by the Michigan Department of Education and that sports safety training would be a prerequisite for a coach before a school could hire them. Individuals coaching or teaching before July 1, 2004 or those with physical limitations would not be required to obtain certification.

SB 179 and HB 4038 also establish that a person who is certified and performs physical aid on another person is not liable for damages, making them consistent with the Good Samaritan Law. In addition, SB 179 exempts coaches who may also be doctors, nurses and other emergency personnel from receiving the additional training.